
**Natural Resources, Ecology &
Parks Committee**

SSB 5278

Brief Description: Establishing the ocean policy review commission.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation (originally sponsored by Senators Jacobsen, Kline and Fraser).

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Establishes the 13 member Ocean Policy Review Commission (Commission) to examine findings from the United States Commission on Ocean Policy and the Pew Oceans Commission and identify recommendations for early implementation.
- Directs the Commission to review, identify, and recommend policies and management of coastal and ocean resources.

Hearing Date: 3/24/05

Staff: Jeff Olsen (786-7157).

Background:

In 2000, Congress created the United States Commission on Ocean Policy (USCOP). The USCOP recommended in its 2004 final report to create a National Ocean Council within the Executive Office of the President and coordination of ocean policy at the regional and state levels. The Pew Oceans Commission issued a report in 2003 recommending the creation of an ocean policy agency and regional ocean policy councils. In response to the USCOP report, the President released an Ocean Action Plan in December 2004, creating a cabinet level Committee on Ocean Policy and outlining a series of steps to improve the state of the nation's ocean waters.

The Coastal Zone Management Program (CZMP) is authorized by the federal Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) of 1972 and administered at the federal level by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The CZMA establishes policies to preserve, protect, develop, and where possible, to restore or enhance the resources of the coastal zone. In addition, the act encourages and assists states to exercise their responsibilities in the coastal zone through the development and implementation of CZMPs. States prepare CZMPs that describe their coastal resources and how they are managed. Activities that affect land use, water use or natural resources in the coastal zone must comply with regulations identified in the CZMP, also known as enforceable polices. The Department of Ecology (Department) developed the state CZMP in

1976. The enforceable policies in the CZMP are based on six existing state laws including the Shoreline Management Act, the State Environmental Policy Act, the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, the Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council, and the Ocean Resource Management Act.

Summary of Bill:

The 13 member Ocean Policy Review Commission is established. Members of the committee include the Governor, Director of the Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Commissioner of Public Lands or their designees, and representatives from each major caucus in the Senate and the House of Representatives. The Commission also includes six individuals with expertise on ocean issues to be appointed by the Governor. A working group, representing a broad range of interests, will advise the Commission. Staff to the Commission will be provided by state agencies. Additionally, the Commission may contract with the University of Washington for additional technical assistance on marine affairs and fisheries issues.

The Commission is required to examine issues pertaining to Washington's coastal and ocean resources. The scope of the Commission's work includes evaluating the condition of the state's ocean resources, methods for improving coordination between federal, tribal, state, and local entities, methods for improving the use of scientific resources, and methods for funding ocean programs. The Commission will report immediate steps the state can take regarding ocean policy issues by December 31, 2005. The Commission will report its complete findings and recommendations by December 31, 2006.

The Coastal and Ocean Resources account is created to receive gifts, grants, and appropriations. Expenditures from the account may only be used for ocean related activities. Additionally, during the course of the Commission's work, the Governor shall represent the state on issues of ocean policy and seek federal grants and other sources of funding for Washington's ocean programs.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.